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3 December 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director for Special Activities
Deputy Assistant Director for Special Activities

SUBJECT : Summary of OSA Activities for Week Ending
30 November 1963

1. OPERATIONAL MISSIONS

a. IDEALIST

(1) Operational Detachments.

(a) All detachments were retained on the twelve-hour alert that was issued immediately after the assassination of President Kennedy. A decision should be forthcoming soon as to how long the alert will be maintained.

(b) Deployment of the Edwards Detachment to Ramney Air Force Base has been delayed pending approval of the Special Group. The new date for this movement was set as 1 December with the Detachment alerted for a mission on 3 December 1963 against ☐ targets.

(2) Accident Board Preliminary Conclusions. A preliminary report from the SAC Accident Investigation Board concerning Article 350 showed that the aircraft was completely intact upon impact with the water, that the pilot had ejected near the time of the impact, that the engine was not running at the time, and that the pilot had been having pressurization problems. All components of the aircraft that could have had an effect on the accident are being returned to the aircraft and engine manufacturers for analysis. The Board has recessed until the results of this analysis have been determined. It was decided during the investigation that the remainder of the wreckage would be disposed of at sea by the Navy. This would include all classified items also.

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(3) Conference With Field Personnel.

(a) A Headquarters conference has been planned for 9 thru 13 December for commanders and pilot representatives from the Edwards Detachment and [] Detachment. For security reasons, the conference will take place in a building not located in the Headquarters Area.

(b) The purpose of the conference is twofold; operational, as well as administrative and personnel, matters will be discussed. The conference will include a recapitulation of IDEALIST activities and plans, special project briefings, and various briefings on other subjects such as data processing, intelligence communications, materiel and weather. In addition, the technical capabilities and operation of aircraft systems such as Systems IXA, XHA, [] and cameras and film will be discussed. As a result of these briefings and discussions, policies will be established to implement recommendations and solve administrative problems.

b. SATELLITES. CORONA/MURAL Mission 9061 was launched successfully at 1616 hours EST on Thursday, 27 November. The satellite systems seemed to be working satisfactorily. Recovery is planned for 2 December 1963.

2. OX CART PROGRAMS

a. PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S BRIEFING. A portfolio (prepared to assist in briefing the President on the A-12 program) was submitted to the Director of Central Intelligence through the DD/S&T for use in discussing the subject of advanced "U.S. reconnaissance capability" with the President. The President evidenced considerable interest in the programs.


b. OX CART RECONNAISSANCE ACHIEVEMENTS

(1) Aircraft #121 flew Flight #93 on Tuesday, 26 November 1963, and set two new records for the A-12 aircraft. The design speed of MACH 3.2 was achieved and maintained for more than one minute before it became necessary to slow down in order to keep from over-running the boundary of the Special Operating Area which has been established for conducting flight tests. The altitude attained (78,000 feet) was also a record for these A-12 flights. Engines and spikes operated smoothly throughout the flight, but a mild airflow roughness was persistent above MACH 3.05.

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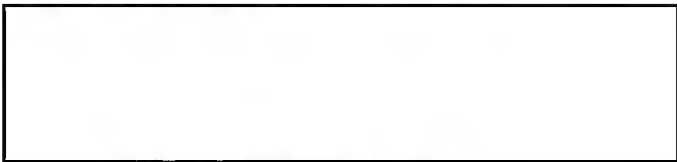
(2) Flight #94 was flown on 27 November with another new high  at 73,000 feet. No significant problems were encountered.

3. GENERAL - Second Generation of Pioneer Reconnaissance Satellites.

a. Due to the cancellation of LANYARD and the decrease in flight frequency of CORONA/MURAL-type missions, engineering personnel on these programs probably will begin to drift to jobs in other areas. A question has been raised by the CORONA Project Office at Palo Alto, California, on the desirability of using this experienced talent to conduct a desired criteria study on a second generation Pioneer Reconnaissance Satellite.

b. Experience with the current system has brought to light many ways to make a better system if the designers could begin anew. Modernization of system requirements would precede initiation of the actual work. It is believed that a more realistic and practical system can be developed in a minimum amount of time under CIA sponsorship than could be attained under the Department of Defense system.

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Chief, Programs Staff
(Special Activities)

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